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VOC FOR PGM/FN
BACKGROUNDER NO. 5-5866
CLAUDIO ESKENAZI

MAY 26, 1978

THE HAVANA NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE

ANNCR:

REPORTS COMING OUT OF THE NON-ALIGNED COORDINATING BUREAU CONFERENCE, WHICH ENDED ITS HAVANA MEETING ON MAY 21, SAY THERE WERE MAJOR DIFFERENCES ON SEVERAL KEY ISSUES. VOA NEWS ANALYST CLAUDIO ESKENAZI HAS DETAILS.

VOICE:

THE FINAL COMMUNIQUE OF THE HAVANA MEETING, AS EXPECTED, PRESENTED A GENERAL CONSENSUS ON A WIDE RANGE OF ISSUES. IN THE WORDS OF A CUBAN OFFICIAL, "IT REPRESENTED ONE MORE SUCCESS FOR THE UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRIES WHICH UNITED UNDER THIS MOVEMENT, FACE UP TO IMPERIALISM, COLONIALISM, NEOCOLONIALISM, ZIONISM AND RACISM."

HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO REPORTS FROM INSIDE THE CONFERENCE HALL, THERE WERE CONFLICTING VIEWS ON A NUMBER OF MAJOR INTERNATIONAL ISSUES. FOR ONE THING, THE WESTERN SAHARA DISPUTE BETWEEN MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA ON ONE SIDE AND ALGERIA AND THE POLISARIO FRONT ON THE OTHER WAS A FOCUS OF VERBAL TIRADES.

MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA PARTITIONED THE FORMER SPANISH SAHARA AFTER SPAIN GAVE UP ITS LAST MAJOR POSSESSION ON THE AFRICAN MAINLAND. BUT THE RADICAL GUERRILLAS FROM THE POLISARIO FRONT AIDED BY ALGERIA AND CUBA HAVE BEEN PRESSING FOR AN INDEPENDENT WESTERN SAHARA.

MODERATE NON-ALIGNED NATIONS, OBSERVERS SAY, ALSO CLASHED WITH THE MORE RADICAL PRO-SOVIET COUNTRIES ON THE ISSUE OF CUBAN-SOVIET INTERVENTION IN THE HORN OF AFRICA. SOUCES AT THE CONFERENCE SAY THAT SEVERAL ARAB STATES SHOWED A GROWING CONCERN

OVER SOVIET AND CUBAN INVOLVEMENT IN ETHIOPIA, SOMALIA AND SOUTHERN YEMEN.

MORE IMPORTANT PERHAPS, ACCORDING TO OBSERVERS AT THE HAVANA CONFERENCE, MANY MODERATE NON-ALIGNED NATIONS, ARE CONCERNED THAT ATTEMPTS ARE BEING MADE IN NON-ALIGNED FORA TO FIND A COMMON GROUND WITH THE SOVIET UNION ON PRACTICALLY ALL MAJOR INTERNATIONAL ISSUES. STILL, SOME OF THE MODERATES AT HAVANA ARE CLAIMING CREDIT FOR HAVING TONED DOWN SOME DIRECT ATTACKS ON U.S. PEACE EFFORTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST. THE MODERATES REPORTEDLY ARGUED STRONGLY WITH THE PALESTINIAN LIBERATION ORGANIZATION (PLO) AND OTHER ARAB RADICALS THAT THE CAREER ADMINISTRATION IS NOW ADOPTING WHAT WAS CALLED A MORE EVENHANDED MIDEAST POLICY.

THE MODERATES APPARENTLY ALSO SUCCEEDED IN DROPPING FROM THE ORIGINAL FINAL HAVANA COMMUNIQUE CUBAN PROPOSALS CONDEMNING WESTERN ARMS DEVELOPMENT AND ENDORSING SO-CALLED NATIONAL LIBERATION STRUGGLES AS A CONTRIBUTION TO SECURITY. BOTH OF THESE ARE SOVIET-ENDORSED PROPOSALS.

ACCORDING, TO OTHER OBSERVERS AT THE HAVANA CONFERENCE, A NUMBER OF NON-ALIGNED NATIONS ARE BEGINNING TO QUESTION CUBA'S NON-ALIGNED CREDENTIALS. MANY DELEGATES REPORTEDLY FEEL THAT RECENT CUBAN ACTIVITY IN SEVERAL AFRICAN NATIONS IS SOVIET-INSPIRED AND AIDED. THEIR VIEWS FIT THOSE OF OTHERS WHO BELIEVE THAT RECENT EVENTS IN AFRICA MAKE CUBA'S CLAIM OF POLITICAL NON-ALIGNMENT A JOKE. PRESIDENT CARTER, FOR ONE, HAS CALLED CUBA ONE OF THE MOST ALIGNED NATIONS IN THE WORLD -- DIRECTLY ALIGNED TO THE SOVIET UNION.

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